



his breathing, the heat, and with the belief he could stay in long points without it hurting his chances of winning. Now that he's overcome those issues his shot

selection is more controlled. He's not looking to finish points too quickly from poor positions in the court, his defensive game has improved and he's finding parts of the court that were eluding him before because he's playing with better court position and more spin off the forehand.

"His backhand has always been world class. Probably the most important thing he's improved, though, is his mental strength and belief against [Roger] Federer and [Rafael] Nadal."

And he's going to need that in spades. Nadal is aiming for a seventh crown at [Roland Garros](#), which would eclipse [Bjorn Borg](#)'s record haul from the '70s and early '80s when he was the doyen of the dirt. The Spaniard has the best career winning percentage of any player in the Open Era on his favourite surface, winning just over 93 per cent of his matches - a statistic that rises to over 96 per cent if you only take into account the opponents he has encountered since 2005. He has only suffered one defeat at the French Open since making his debut in that very same season, when [Robin Soderling](#) got the better of him in 2009.

"The toughest opponent on clay is Nadal, there's no question about it,"

Djokovic insists. "Physically he's the strongest player on the tour and clay demands the most physical effort from the players out of all the surfaces. Your endurance has to be on a very high level, because all the long rallies that you play on hard courts, it's double that on clay. Mentally he has this incredible ability to stay focused from the first point to the last."

"For so long it seemed a near impossible task"

However, Djokovic can take heart from the fact that he was able to snap Nadal's 37-match clay court winning streak in Madrid last spring, and then backed that up by beating him again the following week in Rome, a feat that had hitherto been regarded as virtually impossible. Adding to the intrigue of a possible dream final showdown between Djokovic and Nadal at [Roland Garros](#) are the Spaniard's two victories over Djokovic in ATP World Tour Masters 1000 finals this clay-court season in Monte-Carlo and Rome, the first of which snapped Djokovic's seven-match winning streak against Rafa.

And Djokovic will surely appreciate that [Roland Garros](#) has previously been the battleground for similar highly significant exploits.

"When I won the Grand Slam it changed my career and my life," [Andre Agassi](#) said in 2009, looking back on that famous final against [Andrei Medvedev](#). "It was the most profound moment, having to overcome all of the self-doubt and all of the obstacles it takes to win [in Paris]. It's something that I'm so proud of because every surface, and all the different conditions, demand so much of you mentally and physically. To win on all four surfaces in your career is one of the greatest achievements in sport."

And Cahill, who coached Agassi, concurs. "Andre was the first player in quite some time to achieve that feat so it certainly was a special moment. Considering that was the event that looked like being his first major win, and to then suffer the disappointment of losing it again and again, meant he'd been through everything emotionally before finally winning.



"It also was a point of separation from his peers through the generations that he'd competed against. His journey through life and sport has always been fascinating but he would tell you that the moment [Andrei] Medvedev missed that final forehand was the most special moment of his career. The sense of relief after all the years of trying, getting so close, and then finally succeeding was every emotion wrapped up into one glorious day."

A career Grand Slam is undoubtedly an accomplishment worthy of greatness, but nobody since the legendary [Rod Laver](#) in 1969 has been able to hold all four titles at the same time, so Djokovic has an opportunity to elevate himself to an even higher plane than his illustrious peers and in doing so create a legacy that will live on forever. And if he is successful, the fact that he's been able to do it while competing against some of the greatest competitors ever to assemble at the same time speaks volumes.

"You have to be a complete player to win all four majors," explains Cahill. "It says a lot about our current generation that Federer and Nadal have done it, and now possibly Djokovic will do it too. For so long it seemed a near impossible task and then in the space of a few years these three have

players have taken the game to a whole new level. They have no weaknesses, they can win on any surface, they thrive on new challenges and they are making the next generation of player better by the standard they are setting."

So history beckons for Serbia's favourite son, but his legion of fans will be well aware that other truly outstanding players have also had the opportunity to seize the moment and achieve true greatness only to then fail when destiny came calling.

"I've been dreaming of that moment and I still have a lot to prove to myself"

Federer and Nadal have both held three major titles at the same time, but they were both unable to win their fourth in succession. Nadal was beaten at the [Australian Open](#) in 2011 by [David Ferrer](#), and Federer was twice denied by losses to Nadal in the 2006 and 2007 [Roland Garros](#) finals. [Pete Sampras](#) also held three majors going into the French Open in 1994, only to be beaten in the quarter-finals by [Jim Courier](#).

But Nole remains undaunted.

"Of course I want to win more majors and it would be unbelievable to complete the Grand Slam," he says. "I've been dreaming of that moment and I still have a lot to prove to myself.

"Everything is possible."

[Back To Table Of Contents](#)

FACEBOOK FANS

Related Topics: [DEUCE](#), [Novak Djokovic](#), [DEUCE Roland Garros Wimbledon 2012](#), [DEUCE Roland Garros Wimbledon 2012 Novak Djokovic](#)

Corporate

[Rulebook](#)

[Jobs](#)

[ATP Aces For Charity](#)

[About](#)

[History](#)

[Management](#)

[Structure](#)

Media

[Daily Media Notes](#)

[News Releases](#)

[2012 Media Guide](#)

[Rankings and Statistics](#)

[Results Archive](#)

[RSS Feeds](#)

Partnerships

[ATP Partners](#)

[Partnership Opportunities](#)

[Online Advertising](#)

Affiliates

[Intl. Tennis Hall of Fame](#)

[Intl. Tennis Federation](#)

[Women's Tennis Association](#)

Communities

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[YouTube](#)

GET YOUR ATP FAN CREDENTIAL

- Insider News
- Daily Results
- Mobile Alerts
- Ticket Offers

Your Email Address

[Get More](#)



© copyright/database right 2012 ATP Tour, Inc. All Rights Reserved. No part of this site may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any way or by any means (including photocopying, recording or storing it in any medium by electronic means), without the written permission of ATP Tour, Inc.
[Terms & Conditions](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Enable Mobile](#)

digitaria